British Waterways London

ISSUE 10 - AUTUMN/WINTER 2006

TOURISM AFLOAT

WATERWAY NEWS FOR TOURISM PROFESSIONALS

WATERWAYS CAMPAIGN ATTRACTS 64,000 VISITORS

A campaign aimed at the domestic market promoting the Thames and London's waterways was launched in May by Visit London.

The promotion included page, tube card and poster advertising, 1 million free guides, adverts on buses, online advertising and targeted PR stunts such as free rides on a visiting Venetian Gondola in Little Venice.

Explore London's waterways by Little Venice
visitlondon.com/waterways
TOTALLY LONDON
CANAL BARGE CRUISES
WALK ALONG THE REGENT'S CANAL
LITTLE VENICE · JASON'S WHARF & RESTAURANT LE COCHONNET REGENTS PARK
THE CANAL MUSEUM · CAMDEN LOCK MARKET

Tube Card advertising London's Canals

64,329 people visited London's rivers and canals as a direct result of seeing the campaign advertising, with the majority identifying underground and tube posters as the most memorable advertisements.

Popularity of BW's Days Out Guide on Waterscape.com also increased with 2,500 people downloading the leaflet as a direct result of the campaign.

PRESCOTT VISIT

In August Deputy Prime Minister John Prescott visited the Stonebridge Lock Waterside Centre on the River Lee in Tottenham. The new community and boating facilities centre, which opened last June, was funded by the Department for Communities and Local Government Growth Areas Fund, as well as contributions from the Lee Valley Regional Park Authority (LVRPA) and BW.

Mr Prescott met with representatives from BW and LVRPA to find out about the next round of projects helping to regenerate the area, including a new pedestrian bridge over the River Lee at Hale Wharf. He also met with Jeanette Sitton of Friends of Tottenham Marshes, and David Webb, who has established the Lee Valley Canoe & Cycle Centre next door.

Left to right: Janet Green, Partnerships Officer, Lee Valley Regional Park Authority, Mark Bensted, London Director, British Waterways, Steve Marshall, Area Manager LVRPA, Rt Hon John Prescott, Deputy Prime Minister, Tony Hales, chairman BW.

NEW BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

Jacksons's Square, Bishop's Stortford, CGI

A major new development at the head of the River Stort Navigation will transform the waterside in the centre of Bishop's Stortford, with a restaurant, new homes, public square and shops. BW is welcoming expressions of interest from potential boat trip operators. For an information pack please contact Nerissa Bryden before the end of October 2006.

BW is also looking for a partner to operate a small café in Brentford's Toll House which offers an indoor area and patio space outside for tables and chairs. To find out more please contact Mark Blackwell, Leisure Manager on 020 7985 7207 or email mark.blackwell@britishwaterways.co.uk

LONDON ZOO INVESTS IN RAINFOREST ATTRACTIONS FOR 2007

London Zoo, a top attraction alongside the Regent's Canal in Camden has the builders in. Two new state-of-the-art exhibits are currently under construction and are expected to open at Easter 2007. The exhibits are part of an ongoing programme of improvements at London Zoo for both animals and visitors.

Gorilla Kingdom

Gorilla Kingdom takes visitors on a journey through the African rainforest, where they encounter birds, monkeys and invertebrates before discovering a family of western lowland gorillas on their island clearing - separated simply by a moat.

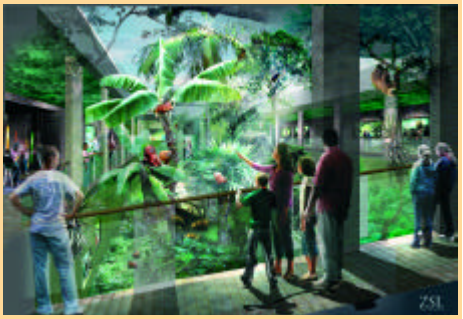
Baby Gorilla, looking forward to a new home at London Zoo

Set over 6000 metres square in the heart of London Zoo, this £5.3 million development will mark a step-change for the Zoo. With interactive media points and a field station to explore, the attraction gives insight into ZSL conservation fieldwork in Africa, demonstrating how gorillas and their rainforest habitats need our help.

Clore Rainforest Lookout

The Clore small mammal house reopens next Easter following major work to thrust it into the 21st Century. The most impressive addition to the structure will be the new central exhibit, Rainforest Lookout, a basement to roof-top South American rainforest under a translucent dome.

The £2.3 million two-storey exhibit will hold a sizable collection of tropical trees and provide an immersive forest environment for free-roaming tamarins, marmosets, birds and agoutis. Visitors can walk around this central exhibit at canopy level with unrestricted views of the tree-top monkey groups, then descend to the forest-floor to find out what goes on in this secret space.



Clore Rainforest Lookout, artist's impression

A nocturnal area will provide further opportunity to see how forests around the world come to life at night and a workshop space enables visitors and school children to explore the animals and their unique habitats.

For more details or to request images, please contact Jenny Bidwell, Travel Trade Marketing Executive on 020 7449 6275 or jenny.bidwell@zsl.org

FESTIVAL SUCCESS

The first ever Brentford Waterside Festival took place on Saturday 27 May at Brentford Gauging Lock in West London. Despite the pouring rain, over 3,000 people enjoyed free live music, street entertainment, boat trips, a farmers' market, craft stalls and children's activities throughout the day. Organisers, BW, and sponsors ISIS Waterside Regeneration and St George were pleased so many people came out to support the event and see the changes to the area. It is hoped that the festival will become an annual feature.

Entertainers at Brentford Waterside Festival

A floating beach delighted visitors at the FunQuay Beach Weekend with over 35,000 people attending the free family event at West India Quay in Docklands on August bank holiday weekend. Organised by X-Leisure and BW, the event hosted Britain's only floating beach alongside a packed entertainment programme including street artists, live music, funfair rides and Brighton Farmers' Market.

FunQuay Beach Weekend, August 2006

SAFER AND MORE ACCESSIBLE TOWPATHS

BW's network of towpaths provide green traffic-free routes across the capital. Improvement works this summer on the Paddington Arm have included an 800-metre section of towpath at Ladbroke Grove and a 3-kilometre stretch from Greenford to Alperton, plus a 1-kilometre section on the Regent's Canal between York Way and St Pancras Way.

This winter further towpath improvements are scheduled for Roydon Lock to Hunsdon Mead on the River Stort and Coppermill Lock to Tumbling Bay footbridge on the Grand Union Canal.

All these improvements are part of an ongoing programme, funded by a variety of partners including TfL and local authorities, to make our towpaths safer, more attractive and accessible for the thousands of people who use them every day.

HOT SUMMER INCREASES DUCKWEED

BW is committed to improving clearance of weed on the River Lee Navigation and Limehouse Cut, which this summer were overwhelmed by the invasive plant. The weed is hazardous to boats, becoming entangled in propellors, blocks out sunlight in the water and looks unsightly when litter builds on top of it. Last year, with the help of Lea Rivers Trust, BW removed over 400 tonnes of weed and is currently in discussions with the Environment Agency and Thames Water to improve water quality in the Lower Lea Valley.

ENGINEER'S WHARF

Working with developer Taylor Woodrow, BW is creating 20 moorings in a new basin on the Paddington Arm of the Grand Union Canal at Northolt, just 10 miles from central London. The berths, which are all fully serviced, are likely to be available early in the new year.

The basin, named Engineer's Wharf, is the centrepiece of Grand Union Village, a 54-acre mixed-use development by Taylor Woodrow's Bryant Homes, including over 700 Eco Homes, shops, restaurants, a crèche and 20 acres of public open space, plus a proposed community centre with health and leisure facilities.

To register your interest for a berth contact BW London.

Engineer's Wharf, artist's impression

HOUNSLOW HERITAGE GUIDES OPEN HISTORIC TOLL HOUSE

Brentford Toll House Information Centre

From September the information centre which occupies one half of the Grade II Listed Brentford Toll House will open one Sunday a month thanks to Brentford & Chiswick Local History Society volunteers.

Built in the early 1900s, the Toll House is situated on Brentford Lock Island, next to the Gauging Locks on the Grand Union Canal. In the heyday of commercial traffic on the canal, the building held ledgers recording the weight and type of cargo carried on boats, for which the carrier was charged. The information centre now tells the history of the waterways and displays artefacts found in the archaeological dig on Brentford Island.

As well as opening up the Toll House, volunteers from the local history society will provide visitors with additional local information. In addition, Hounslow Heritage Guides currently offer regular tours from June to October at Brentford, Chiswick and Isleworth. Private tours and talks are also available by arrangement. Call Janet McNamara on 020 8560 3718 or visit www.hounslow-heritage.org.uk

WATER VOLES THRIVING AND BATS SPOTTED

The water vole, immortalised as Ratty from 'Wind in the Willows', is the UK's most endangered mammal. Threatened by development and preyed upon by the non-native American mink their numbers have declined dramatically in recent years but a recent survey by BW and Herts & Middlesex Wildlife Trust revealed unexpectedly large populations of the endangered water vole on the River Lee Navigation in Hertfordshire. The study of the waterway between King's Mead Nature Reserve and Cheshunt showed that the river corridor is an important habitat for water voles.

Commenting on the survey, Leela O'Dea, ecologist for BW London said: "Water voles were once common sites along our canals and rivers but their numbers have been decimated in the last 30 years. Identifying where they live is crucial to their survival as we can take steps to improve their habitats. Our survey looked for signs of water voles on the Lee Navigation and we were delighted to find evidence of hot spots at King's Mead and Silvermead nature reserves and on the navigation near Cheshunt."

A water vole found in the study on the River Lee Navigaton

Canals are also havens for a number of species of bats, which feed on insects found on water and in canalside vegetation. The Slough Arm is rich in vegetation and has a number of old bridges, providing a good habitat for bats, which roost in trees or cracks in old brickwork. In August BW led a Bat Walk with Friends of the Slough Arm and spotted two different species of bats - Pipistrelles and Daubentons.

To find out more about waterway wildlife and to take part in BW's annual National Waterway Wildlife Survey, log on to www.waterscape.com/wildlife

DINE AND CRUISE IN STYLE ON THE RIVER STORT

Annie and Paul Newman have set up Annie's Launch at Parndon Mill on the River Stort in Harlow, Essex. The couple spent their university days living on a narrowboat on the Regent's Canal in Camden and more recently Annie, a trained chef and mural artist, decided to use her culinary skills and love of narrowboating to entertain small parties of up to 12 on board their newly built narrowboat. While Annie cooks, Paul steers the luxury boat, now available for private charter along the River Stort.

Offering wine tasting cruises, pampering days, art trails, art workshops and tailor-made packages, Annie's Launch has had a busy first season and is booked through to autumn 2006. For 2007, the couple plan to push the business even further by working with a limousine service and helicopter charter company to tempt customers with a taste for luxury.

Party on board Annie's Launch

Jenny Roberts was looking for a special treat for her birthday this summer and discovered Annie's Launch: "The combination of beautiful scenery and excellent food whilst slowly gliding along the River Stort, combined with Annie's wonderful hospitality, made this a 50th birthday I will never forget."

For more information on Annie's Launch and how to book visit www.annieslaunch.co.uk or phone 01279 721620.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

London Boat Show 2007

BW will once again be teaming up with the Environment Agency to provide advice about visiting canals and rivers on the Inland Waterways Feature during the London Boat Show, at the Excel Centre, 5-14 January 2007. For more information visit www.londonboatshow.com

Tourism Businesses Marketing Meeting

BW London's annual marketing meeting for leisure and tourism partners is planned for late afternoon on Tuesday 16 January 2007. An invitation and more details will follow nearer the time.

FILMING UPDATE

Waterway enthusiast Adam Hart-Davis and Hercules the horse with BW London waterway operatives Mick Stephenson (left) and Gary Nicholls

Film makers continue to be attracted to BW's canals and rivers in London, providing an important income as well as promoting London's waterways around the world.

The photo (above) was taken during filming for a new ITV London series 'How London Was Built' to be screened in October and November 2006. During the filming on the Hanwell Flight on the Grand Union Canal, horse-boating was re-enacted. The production team also filmed at a series of other locations on London's canals over three days, including Little Venice and Camden on the Regent's Canal and the Old Royal Gunpowder Mills, on the River Lee.

'The Nature of Britain', a new six-part BBC series to be hosted by Alan Titchmarsh in autumn 2007, has also been filming on London's canals this summer. They will report on the work of the Lea Rivers Trust on the River Lee in East London as part of their fresh water programme.

And 'Waterworld', a series popular with one million viewers in the Midlands, focusing on daily life on the inland waterways, is currently filming a series for ITV London, due to be screened next spring.

For further information about how we promote London's waterways please contact

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